

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core are heated to a superambient temperature above a softening temperature of the binder present in the unfired core to soften said binder.

A  
Sub  
C2  
3. (Amended) The method of claim 2 including controlling the rate of travel of the conveyor such that said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core are heated to said superambient temperature when they are located proximate an exit opening of the heating oven.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 including removing said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core from the conveyor after exiting the heating oven so that said at least one setter and said unfired ceramic core can cool to ambient temperature.

Sub  
C3  
5. (Amended) The method of claim 4 wherein said at least one setter supplies heat to said unfired ceramic core after exiting the heating oven and during cooling to ambient temperature.

6. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core conforms to a surface of said at least one setter by being heated to said superambient temperature.

7. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core is placed between a top setter and a bottom setter and is conveyed through the heating oven between the top setter and bottom setter.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said unfired ceramic core includes an airfoil region.

Versions of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 marked up to show changes made thereto follow:

1. (Amended) A method of treating a ceramic core after molding and before firing for use in casting molten metallic material, comprising placing an unfired ceramic core having a molded core shape and having [a] an organic binder on at least one setter, placing [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired ceramic core thereon on a conveyor that conveys [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired core through a heating oven, and conveying [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired ceramic core through the heating oven to heat [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired ceramic core to an elevated superambient temperature effective to soften said binder to reduce distortion of said unfired ceramic core.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired ceramic core are heated to a superambient temperature above a softening temperature of the binder present in the unfired core to soften said binder.

3. (Amended) The method of claim 2 including controlling the rate of travel of the conveyor such that [the] said at least one setter and [the] said unfired ceramic core are heated to said superambient temperature when they are located proximate an exit opening of the heating oven.

4. (Amended) The method of claim 1 including removing [the] said at least one setter and [the] said unfired ceramic core from the conveyor after exiting the heating oven so that [the] said at least one setter and [the green] said unfired ceramic core can cool to ambient temperature.

5.(Amended) The method of claim 4 wherein [the] said at least one setter supplies heat to [the] said unfired ceramic core after exiting the heating oven and during cooling to ambient temperature.

6.(Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [the] said unfired ceramic core conforms to a surface of [the] said at least one setter [after] by being heated to said superambient temperature.

7.(Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [the] said unfired ceramic core is placed between a top setter and a bottom setter and is conveyed through the heating oven between the top setter and bottom setter.

8.(Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [the] said unfired ceramic core includes an airfoil region.